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March 30, 1995

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

EIU REVIEW GETS TOP RATING

CHARLESTON --Eastern Illinois University has moved one step closer to earning full accreditation for another 10 years from the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA).

The university this week received a copy of the visiting team report from the visit made in February to evaluate all components of the institution.

The report will now go to a staff review panel and then to the NCA governing board for final action. The board is expected to make an official decision in late summer or early fall.

"The most obvious thing is that we have been recommended for a 10-year reaccreditation which is as good as you can get. So all indications are that Eastern is doing an excellent job," said Eastern President David Jorns.

"Accreditation provides public certification that the institution is of high quality and assists us in enhancing our educational programs and other related activities," Jorns noted.

"The dialogue contained in the report," he added, "confirms that Eastern is a

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fine institution that is headed in the right direction. It also suggests that we have a good base from which to build."

Jorns said Eastern met all five criteria for accreditation: the presence of a clearly defined mission; an effective use of human, financial and physical resources; the achievement of educational goals; the accomplishment of purposes and a commitment to strengthening educational effectiveness; and demonstration of integrity in institutional practices and relationships.

He noted that most of the information contained in the 39-page report was presented by NCA team members during an exit interview on Feb. 8.

Jorns said the NCA team recognized that "campus relationships are particularly positive and that community confidence in the institution is strong."

Other strengths cited by NCA are a strong commitment to collegiality and shared governance by all segments of the campus community; dedicated faculty, staff and students; an effective student residential housing program; a successful Minority Admissions Program, which has produced impressive graduation and retention rates; and a satisfied student body.

"They also recognized our strategic planning process and our efforts to reallocate resources to higher priorities," Jorns said.

The eight-member team addressed several areas of concern, including deferred maintenance, instructional equipment replacement, faculty salaries and professional development for faculty and staff.

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They recommended that Eastern continue to develop and refine its general education program and develop a more elaborate plan for assessment of student academic achievement.

"While NCA's overall response was positive, they did give us food for thought. There are some things we will want to look at more carefully and re-evaluate," Jorns said.

Prior to the NCA visit, Eastern faculty, staff and students had completed an extensive two-year institutional self-study, which the visiting team found useful. Team members also met with more than 200 university and community constituencies to collect information for their report.